

LITTLE, BUT LOVELY

NO. 3549

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1917
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”
Luke 12:32*

How kind and tender Jesus was towards His disciples! When He spoke sternly, it was to the outside multitude. Many a time was His spirit moved to rebuke them sharply. Very familiarly, however, did He unbend Himself in the presence of the few attached followers who were gathered round Him and drew near to Him, His chosen, His beloved. To them He unveiled His heart, to them He disclosed the things which He had received of the Father, from them He kept back nothing that pertained to their welfare, “If it were not so, I would have told you,” was once, at least, His confidential expression.

He thus abode with them as a friend, as an elder brother, as a loving Father. It is really pleasant to observe how much He thought of them, how deeply He sympathized with them, how far He was from despising them. The great ones of the earth would have shrugged their shoulders and sneered at the poor helpless band that gathered around the Prophet of Nazareth. Not so the divine Master. Without for a moment concealing the fact that they were a little flock, He looks upon them fondly, and applies to them invitingly the very epithet their enemies would have used invidiously—“little”—as He says, “Fear not, little flock; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Few in number they were, He calls them a flock. Thus He takes upon Himself the office of a shepherd, and by implication He guarantees to them feeding and folding, solace and safeguard. And He speaks of “little” with a liking. As we often employ diminutive words to express endearment, calling those we love by little names, so does the Savior here seem to dwell upon the littleness of those He loves. The original word might be properly rendered “very little.” “Fear not, tiny flock.” There is a double diminutive on which He seems to harp, although it had a pleasant ring about it.

So mothers are wont to call their baby children by bantling names in their fondness for the *wee* creatures. But far surpassing woman’s love, our Savior’s strong affection can no rival know. In accents mild, He seems to say, “Never mind how few you are or how despised, your feebleness gives you a warmer place in My heart and makes Me press you more closely to My bosom. Hush, hush, be still, fear not, little flock.”

And oh! how ready He is with a reason to revive their confidence! “It is your Father’s good pleasure.” Thus does our beloved Lord recognize His own intimate relation with His disciples. “It is your Father’s good pleasure.” And who was their Father but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? He might have said, “It is *my* Father’s good pleasure,” but then this was the sweeter way of putting it, “It is *your* Father’s good pleasure.” They would know that their Father was His Father when He thus said, “*your* Father,” but had He said, “*my* Father,” they might not have so quickly recollected that He was also their Father, or pondering it, they might have had some doubt on the subject.

What He does, therefore, is, in effect, to call Himself their Brother, for if His Father is their Father, then He Himself must be their Brother. They are near kinsmen, He puts Himself on an equality with them when so speaking, at once He lifts them up to Himself while He goes down to them. “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Must it not have been delightful to be on such friendly terms with the blessed Lord of life when He was incarnate here on earth—to have been able to say with John, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”?

Not that we have any need to fret because we have not that privilege, for we have a higher one, inasmuch as Jesus said, “It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” It was better, therefore, for us that Jesus should go in order that we might have the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, not only to dwell with us, but also to be in us. Oh! that we might realize and enjoy the Comforter’s presence at this time! It were ill for us to miss the Savior’s company without having the consolation of the Spirit. To be without the bodily presence of the Lord, and without the spiritual presence of the Holy Ghost were a double loss. Rather let us rejoice that He is in us, and shall be with us evermore.

In the presence of the Comforter we have a higher grade of communion with God than even in the solacing society of the Son of man. He has gone from us, but He has left the words of His comfort to cheer us. In the power of the Holy Spirit, then, let us talk with one another concerning these words, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Our attention is here drawn, first, to *a little flock and a Great Shepherd*, and then to *a great fear*—what if I say a variety of fears—and *a still greater consolation*.

I. IT WAS A LITTLE FLOCK to whom the Savior spoke.

Did He mean, by so designating them, that they were few in point of numbers? Our Savior’s ministry, so far as conversion was concerned, was far from being prolific in its immediate results. The zeal of the Great Preacher painfully contrasted with the apathy of the hearers. The prophet had foreseen the haze that would overhang the mental atmosphere. “Who hath believed our report?” he exclaimed. How few out of Israel were gathered to Him as the fruit of words such as never man spoke, and works such as none but God ever did!

It is not recorded of our Savior that He ever preached a sermon through which three thousand were converted. He left that to one of His servants, as if He meant to fulfill that word, “Greater things than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father.” He would put that honor on His servants and take the disappointment, as He did the shame and the suffering, to Himself. Such is ever His loving way. He will take the bleak side of the hill, and the rough part of the battle for Himself. If there be any softer road to take or any higher honors to win, He will give them to His servants.

His converts were few, they were a little flock. Some of you may be residing in localities where there are but a few believers meeting together. The company looks slender. Do not, I pray you, give place to despondency. You can surely worship God in sincerity and truth, though you may lack the excitement of a crowd. Perhaps you live where there are so few that you can hardly assemble a congregation. Why think yourself denied the privilege of communion with Christ because there are only one or two gathered together in His name? Some of the happiest days believers have ever known have been alone with Christ. The richest displays of Christ’s love have been unfolded to the twos and threes, and the small family gatherings. He has kept His word to the letter, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Should you happen to belong to a larger company, you are not, therefore, shut out from the promise bequeathed to the few. A church of five or five thousand brethren is still a little flock. Compared with the vast outlying mass of unbelievers, it is positively infinitesimal. Think of the millions that know not God—the hundreds of millions that are content to worship idol gods that their own hands have made. Take all Christendom into account, and assume for the moment that every nominal professor were a true convert to Christ, the church would form but a feeble minority, it would be but a little flock. Though the day shall come when the Lord will multiply us and increase us greatly in the earth beyond all present computation, yet to this hour the church of God is only a little flock, and this is sometimes an excuse for distrust and a cause of fear.

Not merely in their number were our Lord’s immediate followers little. *They did not represent much of this world’s wealth*. They had left all that they had. But their little all did not count for much. An old boat or two upon the lake, some nets, a little fishing tackle, and a few et ceteras—surely they were not much to leave! Their capital and their income were alike limited. Their treasurer never had a heavy

purse to carry, though he took care to help himself out of its contents. The disciples of Jesus were poor, very poor. They were somewhat akin to their Master, who had not where to lay His head.

Nor from *their social position* could they exert much influence. Most of them were Galileans—countrymen from the most countrified part of the whole country, and as such, little esteemed. They spoke, no doubt, broad country dialects, and were looked upon as unlearned and ignorant men by those who heard them. When the Holy Ghost was on them, they spoke with great power, but there was not a “D. D.” among them, nor yet a professor from any university. They had not a solitary rabbi that could be put in the front, neither was there one that could have been called rabbi, if others had chosen to call him so.

No prestige did they derive from rank or title, no princes of the blood, no knights or esquires were associated with them, common peasants and fishermen were they all. And I daresay many fears would cross their minds and many gloomy apprehensions would haunt them as they contemplated the strange adventure on which they were called to go forth. They were to preach the Christ of God, and to convert the world to Him, yet see what lowly people they were!

Had they been brought up in the schools of philosophers, had they been the sons of kings or princes, had they the wealth of Croesus at their control, they might have said, “We can do something,” but poverty, and ignorance, and obscurity combined to make them seem little in the eyes of their fellow men. Therefore, the Savior says, “Fear not, little flock!” Against all adverse circumstances, there stands the actual promise. Be sure of this, the kingdom is yours, and you will win the day. Your father in heaven can do without the dignity, the wealth, and the learning of this world, and He has resolved to give you the kingdom, so you shall assuredly have it.

Now the church of God has not much improved in those respects. The aristocracy of the age and the celebrities of the time, those who occupy high places in fashion or in talent, look down contemptuously on the followers of Jesus. We are not put out of countenance. We know full well that not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen. Still, God has chosen the poor of this world. Meek and lowly though they be, He enriches them with the gifts of His kingdom. The church in the aggregate, like its individual members, is small, in number and in influence small—a “little flock.”

And there is another littleness which is common amongst Christ’s followers. They are *very little in matters of grace*. They think and know themselves to be little. The greatest among them generally think themselves the least. One who came not behind the chief of apostles thought himself not worthy to be called an apostle, such was his sense of unworthiness. Little and little worth the Lord’s people account themselves to be. But in point of age, of growth, of experience, some of them are little—very little. They have only lately been born again. They are babes in grace. Jesus meant them when He said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”—yes, you, you who are new-born sons and daughters.

Some, too, are little, not so much because they have been recently converted, as because they have made slow progress, they are of a desponding spirit, and their faith is very feeble. Perhaps they have not walked with God as they should, and yet, although they may have little love, little hope, and little joy, little usefulness, and little holiness, compared with what they ought to have, still if they be believers, if they be the sheep that hear Christ’s voice, know their Shepherd, and follow Him—even to them He says, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

He will not destroy you because you are not what you should be in point of attainment. What though you are as smoking flax when you ought to be a burning and a shining light, He will not quench you. Though you are a broken reed in the music when you ought to be a full organ pipe, pouring forth volumes of praise, He will not break you, but He will make something of you yet. Though you have such little faith that you do not know whether you have any or not, He knows. A drop of water is as much water as the whole volume of water in the sea, and a particle of grace is as truly grace as the great store of grace laid up in the everlasting covenant. A diamond as small as a pin’s head is as much a diamond as the Koh-i-Noor, so the smallest faith, though it is like a grain of mustard seed, is faith which

can move mountains. Jesus knew this, hence He would speak comfortably to those who are little as yet, “Fear not, ye weak and trembling ones! It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Your weakness shall not witness against you.”

Now is not this very precious, that little as the flock may be, the Great Shepherd speaks to them so kindly? “Fear not, little flock,” says He. And oh! how His greatness must have struck them as He thus spoke! They looked on Him and saw that He was not little. He had become like themselves in poverty and obscurity, but still there was a Divinity in His character that could not be eclipsed. He was not little in His birth. “Where is he,” asked the wise men from the East, “that is born King of the Jews?”

Nor was He little in His wisdom, for when but twelve years old the doctors in the temple were astonished at His understanding and answers. He was not little in His power. Did He not teach as one having authority? Did He not heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease as though no symptom could baffle His skill or resist His fiat? He was not little in His influence over men’s hearts, He could turn their current like rivers of water whichsoever way He would. They had a Great Shepherd, He could protect them, He could provide for them, He could lead them on, He could give them the victory, and surely bring them into the rest which He had promised them.

I feel just now as though the Master stood among us and we were the little flock, conscious that we could do nothing, devise nothing, develop nothing, apart from Him. Are there great destinies before us? Is the world to be converted? Surely we are the last people that could ever be able to accomplish it. His presence is our encouragement. Looking up here, and seeing Him standing in the midst, hard by these emblems of His body and blood, we hear His voice saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Behold the baptized Christ giving to His own baptized disciples His own commission. “Go, preach the gospel to every creature.” He vouchsafes, moreover His own authority, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned.” He is the Commander-in-Chief of the little company of nonconformists to the world’s religion, the Leader of the little band of those who desire to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, the Lord and Master of all those who espouse His cross, rejoice in His name, and are not ashamed to bear His reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The Lord grant that the sweetness of these words may come home to the hearts of all of you who are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Let us turn our attention to—

II. THE GREAT FEAR AND THE GREAT CONSOLATION IMPLIED IN OUR TEXT. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

One fear which often agitates God’s servants is that which is alluded to in the foregoing paragraph, *an undue anxiety about temporal things*—A fretfulness that distracts one’s own mind and greatly dishonors God, a disposition utterly unworthy of the sincere believer. Christ deals with it in these words, “Seek not what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; neither be ye of doubtful mind. Why, child, know this, it is not only your Father’s good pleasure to give you bread and water, but the kingdom!” You say, “Will His bounty provide me with food convenient, and raiment fit?” Nay, question it not, since He thus promises to put a crown upon your head, and give you a mansion in the skies!

Surely He who takes the trouble to give you a kingdom hereafter will not let you starve on the road to it. When Saul went out to seek his father’s asses, Samuel met him and anointed him to be king, but after that Saul never fretted about his father’s asses anymore. Are you worrying yourselves about the losses you have had, and the best way of trying to recover them? Here are tidings for you. It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Does not that waken a new and nobler ambition in your breasts? Never mind the asses now, we have other aims and other prospects to engage our thoughts. Affairs of high estate have drawn my mind away from paltry things.

Oh! heir of heaven, you cannot afford to pine and chafe over the little annoyances of this fleeting life. I remember hearing of a crossing sweeper who was pursuing his humble avocation with great diligence, he had a valuable broom, which he would not have lost or spoiled without much grief. To him

the few pence that purchased it were of great importance. But someone—a solicitor of the town—tapped him on the shoulder and said, “My good friend, is your name so-and-so?” “Yes.” “Did your father live in” such a place?—“He did.” “Does your brother live in” such a place? “He does.” “Then I have the pleasure to tell you that you have come into an estate worth £10,000 a year.” I have been told he walked away without his broom, and I can hardly doubt it, for I do not think I would have shouldered the broom myself if I had been in his position.

Oh! Christians, let me pluck you by the sleeve and tell you of princely possessions for which you may well turn aside from your present paltry pickings. They are not worthy to be compared. Jesus Christ informs you that “your Father has given you a kingdom which is infinitely more than all the gold of this world.” You may well say, “Let those who will fret about these earthly things, I will not. I have a kingdom in reversion, I will look out for that inheritance, and I will begin to rejoice in it.” Thus does Christ put to sleep one of His people’s fears!

Another fear we have arises from watching the clouds, *forecasting storms, and anticipating trouble*. Some of us must confess that we have our desponding moments. One is vexed because he sees his trade gradually slipping away, and he anxiously asks, “What shall I do in future years?” Another, with a large family growing up around him, perplexes himself with the question, “What shall I do with those boys and girls of mine?” As he watches the various tendencies in the young people, he wonders which way they will go, and he begins to fret. He does not commit his cause to God, but he disquiets himself in vain. This is unwise.

Others find that their health declines, symptoms of consumption or some other fell disease alarm them, and they say, “What shall I do when this gets worse? How shall I bear it?” “Perhaps I may have painful operations to endure,” says one. “Perhaps,” says another, “I may have to lie bedridden by the year together, what shall I do—oh! what shall I do?”

Our Lord Jesus Christ counsels you what to do. He says, “Let not your heart be troubled.” Don’t fear. Have you not always found hitherto that God has helped and succored you in every grievous plight? You have been foolish enough to dread a thousand dreary ills that never happened to destroy your peace, save in your dreams, like boys in a fog, before whose eyes huge monsters seem to rise, till they come up to the objects of their dread surprise and find they are not monstrous scares, but modest friends who come to greet them. You have often been the victims of your own credulity in the past, cheated by your fears, may it not be the same in the dilemma to which just now your gloomy fancy points?

This I know, when we are in our right mind, we cast our care on God. Let the Lord do as He wills to us, He will never be unkind to us, He has ever been our friend, He never will be our foe. He will never put us into the furnace unless He means to purge the dross out of us, nor will there be one degree more heat in that furnace than is absolutely needful, there will always be mercy to balance the misery, and strength supplied to support the burden to be borne. Cheer up, then. “Fear not, little flock.”

Let us, for the time being at any rate, shake off all these fears, and let us revel in our Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Rough may be the road, but sure will be the end, we are going to the kingdom. When they fetch a foreign princess over to this land to be married to a princely husband, the ship may be tossed on the sea, and the tempest rage with fury, but doubtless the bride would say, “I may well bear this slight inconvenience with equanimity, I am on the way to be made a queen.”

We are on board ship today. We are going to a land where we shall all be princes and kings—as many as believe in Jesus. Come, let us pluck up heart! What though the accommodation be spare, the passage rough, and the wind boisterous, there is a kingdom in prospect. So let us make the best of the voyage. Be not fainthearted yourself, but help others to be cheerful. With a pilgrimage, rather than a voyage in his view, our sacred songster has helped our mirth in his hymn as he sings—

*“With a scrip on my back and a staff in my hand,
I march on in haste through an enemy’s land;*

*The way may be rough, but it cannot be long,
So I'll smooth it with hope, and I'll cheer it with song."*

And somewhere or other in this congregation, I think I can hear the hoarse voice of a desponding believer saying, "Ah! I am not troubled about worldly things! I am not distressed about any trials that may or may not happen to me here below, I have a worse fear haunting me. My terror is more terrible. Suppose I should not be in Christ after all!" The fear lest I have not really believed in Jesus, that I have not experienced a saving repentance, that I have not laid hold upon eternal life, distracts me.

Well, precaution is better than presumption, it is better to go fearing to heaven than to go presuming to hell. I would rather be haunted with fears all my life, and yet found at length, when the shadows flee, amongst those who are God's delight, than I would be inflated with a dauntless confidence all my days, but undeceived at last when the light breaks in be left in lonely horror, the victim of despair.

Tell me now, dear friend, what it is you fear. Do you fear hell? Let me ask you another question—Do you fear sin? If you fear sin, the Lord takes pleasure in you. The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, and in them that hope in His mercy. Your doubts are very painful to bear, no doubt, but for all the distress they cause they will not destroy your soul. Doubting, like a toothache, is more distracting than dangerous. I never heard of its proving fatal to anybody yet. There are humors of the body which serve as safety valves to the constitution. They ward off worse ills.

An anxious solicitude whether you are indeed a child of God, of which we would by all means have you relieved as soon as possible, may have a salutary effect, nevertheless, upon your mind. It may make you walk more carefully, pray more fervently, and live more scrupulously as one who pines for communion with God. I think I have a commission to say to every one here who fears sin, and trembles lest he should not be found at God's right hand when He gathers His saints together to Himself, "Fear not, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

If you fear because you feel your unworthiness, it is a blessed fear. Trust in the worthiness of Christ, and your fear shall give place to faith. Of if you fear because you perceive your feebleness, I am not surprised. Look to Christ's strength, and His succor shall be your solace. Your heavenly Father will of His own good pleasure give you the kingdom.

Or do I hear anyone say, "Well, sir, my fear is not as to the sincerity of my present profession, I trust I am a Christian. I know that I have believed in Jesus, and I do believe in Him, but my serious misgiving is lest I should not hold on to the end." Beloved friend, that is a fear you ought not to entertain. Never countenance it again as long as you live. If there is anything taught in Scripture for certain, it is the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. I am as sure that doctrine is as plainly taught as the doctrine of the deity of Christ.

Words cannot put it more distinctly than God has graciously revealed it. Hear what Christ says. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"—cast not, I beseech you, any suspicion upon the fidelity of our Lord. A question may be raised whether the work is begun by Him, but if He has begun it there can be no question about His completing it. He never forsakes the work of His hands, or begins to build, and then proves unable or unwilling to rear the superstructure. Lay that fear aside, and account it a folly.

Do you doubt whether you are now saved, or whether you shall hold out to the end? Then I counsel you to go back to the cross, and begin again as a penitent sinner to put your trust in a pardoning Savior. Full many a time I have to do that. I see my evidence cut down like the grass, wither like hay, and perish like the green herb. What else, then, can I do, but hie myself off to the foot of the cross, there to stand, and thus to say, "Here I come, a sinner, seeking succor to You, my Lord, to You. I come afresh as though I had never come to You before. If You have never washed me, wash me now! If I have never rested in You, here do I lay me down beneath Your shadow. To Your cross I cling." You will find your fears vanish when you come to the cross anew.

Do this, I pray you, brothers and sisters, as often as you get into the dark awhile, for, notwithstanding all fears to the contrary, it really is “your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” You have not to earn it by your labor, or merit it as a prize, else you might despond or even despair. What is now amiss, I cannot guess, since He will give it to you freely of His own grace. It is not the Judge’s good pleasure to award you the kingdom, but it is “your *Father’s* good pleasure to *give* you the kingdom.” Therefore, repose in the grace of God, rely on the precious blood of Christ, and cast your fears to the winds.

I think I hear a sigh. It is a sickly thought, and it comes from one who has a sickly frame. “*My fear is about dying*. How shall I stand the last dread hour of parting life? Shall I bear up in the weakness of that mortal agony? Perhaps, after all, I shall sink as one who is vanquished in the fray.” Beloved brother, there is a peril more perilous than death. “What is that?” say you. Why, I answer, Life! To live! To live well! There is the point—to live well. If you do succeed in this, you shall find that to die is nothing but just closing up your life’s story. Be it your main care to run the race with honor, then shall you finish your course with joy.

You may leave the dying till the time to die comes, if you will see to the living while the time to live lasts. There is one kind of grace of which we have no immediate need today, that is dying grace. We shall not require the timely succor till the time of our departure is at hand. Or if we crave we shall not have it. Does any one of you put himself on his dying bed in imagination, to forestall the terrors that his fancy paints, he does a very foolish thing. You cannot know what sort of summons you will get to quit your fleshly tabernacle, what sharp pains you may be called to bear, or what sweet comfort may be provided to cheer your spirit when heart and flesh shall fail.

Serve God now with all your strength. Rest in the precious blood now. Seek present communion with your living, loving Lord. Doubt not that He will supply you with grace sufficient for all your future need. You wot not of the good He has in store. As time and space contract, your mind will expand to survey the eternity beyond. As the film comes over these dull organs of sight, the eyes of your understanding will be opened. As you near the banks of Jordan, the fair fields on yonder side will break on your ravished view. You know nothing of them yet. Full many, I warrant you, who depart this life hear the songs of angels long before their ears are closed to the sounds of earth.

And oh! how precious Christ becomes to them! We have seen the flush of glory on their faces. I should think they hardly knew at what moment they entered heaven, for ere they left earth, the radiance of that bright realm dawned upon them in such visions of glory. They were lifted up to Pisgah’s summit, and they looked down on this poor earth from an elevation at which we who still sojourn in the valley do greatly marvel.

*“Jesus can make a dying bed
Seem soft as downy pillows are;
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.”*

Why, some of us have known believers who, after trembling all their days, triumphed in their last hours. In the prime of their strength they were frightened of a mouse, but in the extremity of their weakness, they became so strong that they could face a legion of foes. Nothing could dismay them. Mr. Fearing, who fell over a straw, and said he should never reach the Celestial City, was the very man who died like a giant, singing and shouting with all his might.

God is pleased to let some of His servants live in the dark, and die in the light. I think some of us have our candle lit at one watch of the night, some at another. You may have begun your spiritual life in the dark, and your path has grown brighter and brighter. Or you may have begun in the light, and have since passed through seasons in which darkness has prevailed, or the lamp that guides your feet has dimly burned. God puts some of His bravest servants to bed in the dark because they can bear it, but others cannot. They cross over the river, and angels come to meet them.

Do not darken your days with direful dreams of dreaded death. Perhaps you will die in your sleep, and never know a pang. Perhaps you never will die, Christ may come and take you to Himself. It may prove such a glorious thing to die, that you may say, with Halliday, "Call this dying! Then it is worthwhile to live to die like this!" Death may have more of translation than of dissolution in it. If the dog of hell howl at you, bid him hold his tongue. Your Father's good pleasure will not be frustrated, your fair prospects will not be disappointed.

Does conscience accuse you of slips and falls? Tell conscience of the precious blood, and say, "My Father's good pleasure will rescue His ransomed child from all his sins." Do doubts and fears come up like a swelling torrent? Stem them all with this blessed assurance, "God's counsel will stand, and He will do all His pleasure. We who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ shall assuredly possess the kingdom of God forever and ever."

Oh! how I wish you, all of you, belonged to the number of Christ's sheep! Oh! that every one of you had the promise of the kingdom! The Lord bring you to the feet of Jesus! May the Lord show you what sinners you are, and what a Savior He is! Would to God you might all believe in Him, and pass from death unto life! The fearless transgressor shall fail without help, while the fearful disciple shall be carried with Fatherly care. Herd together, ye little ones, as a flock, the heritage is reserved for you. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

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